



THE CITY OF NEW YORK

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor

Thomas R. Frieden, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner

nyc.gov/health

May 23, 2003

Arnold P. Wendroff, Ph.D.
Mercury Poisoning Project
544 Eighth Street
Brooklyn, NY 11215-4201

Dear Dr. Wendroff:

I am writing in response to your correspondence to Commissioner Frieden requesting information about the status of a study to assess mercury levels among NYC children. As we have previously discussed, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) Environmental and Occupational Disease Epidemiology Unit has been working with the NYS Department of Health (SDOH) and the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to develop a NYC-specific protocol. There are several reasons why this process has taken more time than anticipated.

The DOHMH does not directly oversee or operate public child health clinics and must solicit clinics for participation. We have approached other publicly funded agencies and/or non-profit clinics regarding the feasibility of research staff working within their pediatric clinic settings. No funding is available to compensate or reimburse clinics for obtaining the necessary samples. The study, as proposed by CDC provides no funding to either the City or State Health Departments; however, it provides staff assistance in collecting the samples, administering the study questionnaire, analyzing study results and communicating study findings.

We are in the process of completing our protocol and submitting the protocol to the DOHMH, SDOH and CDC Institutional Review Boards for approval. This process may take several months, and approval is required prior to initiation of any work with human subjects. We are also incorporating into the NYC-specific study, protocols for medical and environmental follow-up of cases with confirmed mercury poisonings.

As you are probably aware, CDC staff has worked with the Chicago Department of Health to develop and conduct a similar study. Data collection took place in Chicago this month. The CDC, DOHMH and SDOH are working hard to ensure that the NYC study will successfully assess mercury levels among children who may be at a greater risk for exposures to mercury. It is anticipated that the same CDC research staff that administered the questionnaires in Chicago will be assigned to work in NYC. At this time, it is anticipated that work on this study will begin in Fall 2003.

Thank you for your interest in this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nancy Jeffery".

Nancy Jeffery, RN, MPH
Research Scientist

C: J. Cone (DOHMH)
J. Leighton (DOHMH)
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